

ing' labor of the society as a whole." Nevertheless, Vaughan's book will certainly open her readers' minds and hands to seeing, touching, and enlarging the multi-colored, intricate weave of giving, and thus the fabric of a peaceful world.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

Susan Hawthorne and Bronwyn Winter, Eds.
Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 2002.

BY LIZ CROCK

In *September 11, 2001: Feminist Perspectives*, Tahmeena Faryal from the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) prophetically declares "Based on historical evidence, we gravely fear that continuation of the U.S. attacks and the resulting civilian lives lost gives excuses to the Taliban and Northern Alliance to wage war, and will also empower and embolden fundamentalist forces in the region and across the world — endangering not only Afghans, but further American lives, and the citizens of many countries." The bombing of a nightclub in Bali, Indonesia, on October 12, 2002, in which many Indonesian, Australian, British and European people lost their lives, may well be an example of such groups being "empower[ed] and embolden[ed]" by ongoing U.S. posturing and moral self-righteousness (if indeed such groups are found responsible). Feminists have a flair for seeing and articulating connections such as these, and in *September 11, 2001: Feminist Perspectives*, an impressive range of feminist writers and activists from all around the world illuminates the events and politics surrounding and deriving from September 11 from multiple angles. The writers

document their reactions and reflections upon September 11, its precursors and its aftermath, in a range of forms: from brief email messages, letters to the United Nations and to George W. Bush, and poems, to public statements and essays.

The reason this book was written, as the editors note, was to document "feminist voices against the war, and feminist analyses of the masculinist ideology behind it." The book also aims to "make feminist sense" of international events that have unfolded since the attacks on the World Trade Center, and it represents a "call for widespread resistance to the masculinist politics of war." *September 11, 2001 Feminist Perspectives*, achieves all these aims and far more. The editors have brought together contributors from many backgrounds and countries—there are representatives of RAWA and of Women Living Under Muslim Laws, UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Union of Australian Women, and individual feminists from Australia, Aotearoa (New Zealand), the United States, Uganda, and India. Many are prominent feminists: Robin Morgan gives a moving first-hand account of the days following the attacks, although to read yet another first-hand account after the media excesses of the past year can feel burdensome at first glance; Catharine MacKinnon, in her piece entitled *State of Emergency* puts the atrocity of September 11 into perspective, in her characteristic brilliantly persuasive and perceptive style. She points out that the terrorism that goes on in the world against women every day should also be recognised as such and asks provocative questions about why what men do to women is not considered to be "war" or "terrorism"; Betty McLellan highlights the invisibility and marginalisation of women in almost all commentary and responses to September 11, and proposes a radical

feminist response and analysis; Farida Akhter analyzes war as a population policy (and the reverse—population policy as a war policy)—in disguised format. Other contributors are political and peace activists, such as Nobel Peace Laureate Rigoberta Menchu Tum whose letter to President Bush invites him to reflect and not to cry for war. A widow of a US soldier who died in the Pentagon attack pleads for non-violence in response to her husband's death. Ani Di Franco and Bronwyn Winter penned poignant poems reflecting upon the aftermath of September 11. What they all have in common is their commitment to "justice not revenge, peace not war" as the GABRIELA network, a U.S.–Phillipine women's solidarity organisation sums it up. In all there are over eighty contributors, all of whom have something powerful to say.

Sitting down to read a book about September 11, 2001 is hardly something to look forward to, though its subtitle "Feminist Perspectives" certainly holds promise and indeed was the only reason that could have persuaded me to read and review this book. Whilst it cannot be said that this is a book which makes enjoyable reading, the subject of September 11 itself being utterly disheartening, it is a book which at once inspires and shocks, moves and awakens and above all, re-affirms the strength of the world's women and the pure necessity for their voices to be heard. The book is rightfully dedicated to "Women who have struggled to perfect the difficult and valuable skill of surviving, who refuse to be overwhelmed by the overwhelming, and who continue to hope against hopelessness." The women contributing to this book, in their passion and clarity of thought and imagination, have surely given hope to many others where none seemed possible. *September 11, 2001: Feminist Perspectives*, represents an essential contribution to the vast literature spawned by the events of that day in New York.